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Dear *Permission to be Powerful* Reader,

## **We're on the healing path in the Zen Center.**

My sensei started meditation after he went sober 30 years ago.

Two friends struggle with depression like me.

They also both have ADHD.

**Sometimes, your mind is in shambles.**

For those people...

**Keeping it “together” is a full-time job.**

So we meditate.

Some problems are too heavy to solve with more thinking.

Sometimes the answer is to clean out everything.

One friend told me tonight after our sitting, he’s looking for healing.

And I can see that earnest desire in is body language.

**I wondered — healing from what?**

**I find you so relatable but I have no idea who you really are.**

**Suffering can come with one great silver lining.**

Suffering makes you look for answers.

If you’re smart — and committed to living a better life.

Sooner or later, life will bring you to your knees...

And it’s going to humble you so much...

You start to pray.

Sometimes the burden you are carrying weighs down on you — making you feel exhausted.

## **But no thing can bring you relief.**

Master Hakuin says...

“Like a child of rich birth, wandering poor on this earth...

We endlessly circle the six worlds.

We’re on a lifelong quest for that “fix”.

But nothing works.

Not more TV, not more food, not more sex, money or drugs.

Even therapy won’t always do the trick.

You can improve.

You can understand.

But... you can never truly escape.

Even therapists are miserable.

I’ve suffered greatly in my life.

Partly my choosing...

I chose a challenging but interesting path.

The beautiful thing about pain, is that it makes you better for the next person or situation.

I’ve been through so many hard times in my past.

Trying times.

Desperate times.

Years of depression with no retreat.

After my mom died from cancer, I was so beside myself I didn't get a haircut for years.

Mental illness is a special kind of hell.

Watching my sister suffer conjures a wretched feeling.

Seeing someone die... before they're dead.

Watching everyone else fall apart.

Crumble under the weight of this burden.

I have blame myself.

**I feel guilty for getting the good life...**

## **When my twin got a life sentence.**

The kind of misery one can never escape.

**Makes you want to get high first  
thing in the morning.**

**Permanent devastation.**

Some people are beyond saving.

And, so, I heal for myself... and also for them.

# **I purge these traumas, because I don't take that privilege for granted.**

I see what staying on the healing path got me...

And I see the people I've long outgrown...

My path was much harder, but it was ultimately much more rewarding.

**There's no more grim a fate than saying permanently stuck...**

**Until you die.**

# **Permanent arrested development.**

There was a time when I thought my depression was just permanent.

But it passed.

A time when I went years getting about five shitty hours per night of sleep.

Now I get the best sleep of my life.

When I stopped exercising and became obese.

Now I haul ass and run with people who challenge me.

When I thought that I wasted my life...

Now I know it's an amazing gift.

And I flirted with throwing it all away.

But life rewards persistence.

Just very slowly.

Painfully.

If am being honest, sometimes God has a twisted sense of humor.

**It takes so long to see benefits most give up long before their time came.**

But not me.

At this point...

I've been on the healing path for so long...

I've turned healing into an **art form**.

I've been consciously growing for such an eternity...

Reading high quality books...

Getting as much therapy as possible...

And doing whatever it took to get better...

**At this stage, I play this game for sport.**

I've already ground myself down to a fine powder.

Turned myself into a masterpiece.

So, now I wonder...

How far can I go?

How enchanted can I make this life, while I still have it?

**I heal because I can.**

**Because some never get the chance**

**Because some are forever lost.**

Until next time,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anton Volney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Anton" on the left and "Volney" on the right, separated by a diagonal line. The entire signature is framed by a large, hand-drawn rectangular border made of thick, dark lines.

Dancer, Writer, Buddhist.



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